

The background of the entire page is a blue-tinted image of the Texas State Capitol building, showing the large dome and the statue on top. The text is overlaid on this image.

*National Achievements,
Local Investments:
15 Years of Making a Difference for
Deep South Texas*

*Congressman Rubén Hinojosa
Representing the 15th District
of Texas
Fall 2011*



Dear Friends,

It has been a great honor to serve the 15th Congressional District of Texas for the past 15 years. I would like to take this opportunity to share with you many of the accomplishments we have achieved together, both for Deep South Texas and the nation.

As your U.S. Representative, my mission has been and continues to be to improve the quality of life in our district by making possible a bold investment in education, health care, infrastructure, and training a 21st century workforce. When I took office in January of 1997, the unemployment rate for Hidalgo County sat at an unconscionable 22 percent. I made it my goal to bring this number down to a single digit and we succeeded—within the first ten years, we brought the rate down below 6 percent.

I look forward to continue to serve you and our unique community, and as always, my door is always open.

Sincerely,

Ruben Hinojosa
Member of Congress



Congressman Hinojosa swears in to office in 2009 with his wife, Martha, and daughters Kaitlin and Karén.

Texas' 15th

District 15 and Deep South Texas

Congressman Hinojosa is proud to represent nearly 700,000 residents who reside in the beautiful Rio Grande Valley and Coastal Bend regions of Texas. **The 15th Congressional District encompasses Bee, Brooks, DeWitt, Duval, Goliad, Jim Wells, Karnes, Live Oak, and Refugio Counties, as well as parts of Cameron, Hidalgo, and San Patricio Counties** and is the home to 146 communities. A few of the towns and cities in the 15th Congressional District include Alamo, Alice, Beeville, Edcouch, Edinburg, Elsa, Goliad, Harlingen, McAllen, Pharr, and San Juan.

Deep South Texas is the fourth fastest growing area in the nation. Over the last 15 years, the population of the 12 counties that are completely or partially located in District 15 has increased by 35 percent. Congressman Hinojosa has been a staunch advocate for increased federal investment in District 15, and as a result, **federal funds invested in District 15 have increased by over 250% from \$3.6 billion in 1996 to \$9.2 billion in 2009 (U.S. Census).**



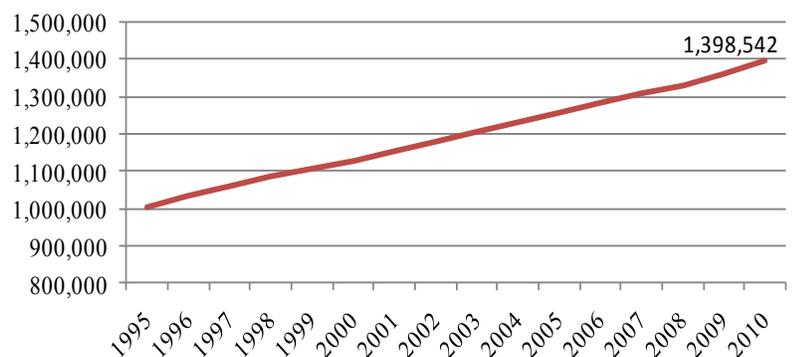
“... federal funds invested in District 15 have increased by over 250% from 1996 to 2009, from \$3.6 billion to \$9.2 billion a year.”



Above: Wild Bluebonnets near the Coastal Bend (top) and the Presidio La Bahia in Goliad County

Population of 12 Deep South Texas Counties

Bee, Brooks, Cameron, DeWitt, Duval, Goliad, Hidalgo, Jim Wells, Karnes, Live Oak, Refugio, and San Patricio Counties



Source: Texas Workforce Commission, U.S. Census

Creating Jobs

Encouraging Economic Growth

Congressman Hinojosa continues to be a dedicated advocate for the economic growth of Deep South Texas, which has seen remarkable improvement over the last fifteen years. The McAllen metro area was one of only two U.S. cities (with El Paso) that had employment levels completely recovered to pre-recession levels by the first quarter of 2011. Additionally, out of the largest 100 U.S. metro areas, the McAllen metro area was the *only* one to gain jobs in the last three quarters of 2009 and the first quarter of 2010 (Brookings Institute). The Milken Institute ranked McAllen number 4 out of 379 metro areas in its "2010 Best Performing Cities: Where America's Jobs are Created and Sustained".

Infrastructure and transportation projects such as the Donna International Bridge and the Anzalduas International Bridge at Mission have brought more commerce and consumers to the region. In Hidalgo County, cross-border cargo and vehicular traffic have increased over 345% and 36% respectively since the beginning of the 1990s. Rep. Hinojosa ensured the acquisition of presidential bridge permits for both bridges.

With the help of the U.S. Commerce Department, Rep. Hinojosa secured \$1.2 million in federal funding for the City of Mercedes for the expansion of its wastewater treatment facility to accommodate the city's newly opened factory outlet mall. The \$65 million outlet mall has 140 retailers, and has become the premier Texas shopping destination south of San Antonio. **This new outlet mall has brought thousands of jobs to the area.** Accordingly, the retail sector has grown 138 percent in the McAllen metro-area over the last decade, and now infuses over \$3.58 billion into the local economy.

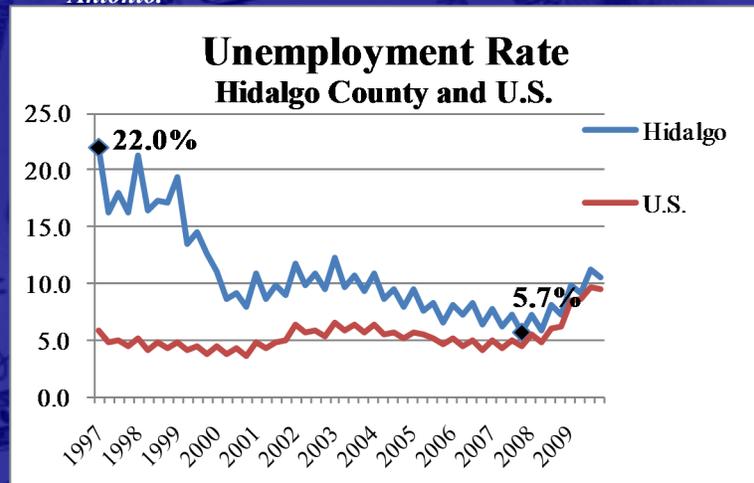
A Proponent for Small Businesses

Congressman Hinojosa is dedicated to increasing and expanding businesses in his district and finding new markets for Deep South Texas products, not only in the United States, but also abroad. To support small business, Hinojosa has defended the Small Business Administration's (SBA) 8(a) program and several other programs at the SBA to ensure that small businesses have a chance to compete.

To help spur growth and support small businesses in the Delta Region, which includes Edcouch, Elsa, Monte Alto, and LaVilla, Congressman Hinojosa secured the \$2.6 million grant from the Economic Development Administration to construct the Mercado Delta and provide operating assistance to the newly formed Delta Region Revitalization Corporation. The Mercado serves as an area where local entrepreneurs, artisans, and farmers can sell locally-produced and imported goods and products. Mexico-based border businesses that cater to U.S. tourists are now seeking to establish new stores at the Mercado Delta. This will transform the Mercado into a truly regional and international marketplace. Similar economic development projects are being developed in Bee, Refugio and Kleberg Counties.



The Rio Grande Valley Premium Outlets in Mercedes, Texas. The \$65 million outlet mall has 140 retailers, has brought 1,300 jobs to the area, and has become the premier shopping destination south of San Antonio.



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Unadjusted, quarterly.

Since Rep. Hinojosa took office in 1997, the unemployment rate for Hidalgo County has decreased from 22.0% to a low of 5.7% in 2007.



The Mercado Delta in Edcouch, Texas, opened in 2009.

Helping Small Businesses

Local Jobs Investments

• American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (stimulus) funding shepherded to District 15 by Rep. Hinojosa created at least 7,600 local jobs, creating a measurable difference (White House).

• Rep. Hinojosa helped the **Pharr Fire Department** obtain a \$975,000 grant from the Department of Homeland Security to support the hiring of new firefighters and the recruitment of volunteer firefighters. The grant was awarded through the Assistance to Firefighter Grant (AFG) program. **Many other cities' fire departments, including Edinburg, Harlingen, and Mission, have received federal grants.**

• **Rep. Hinojosa secured a \$1,000,000 grant award from the Economic Development Administration (EDA) for the Bee Development Authority to be used for renovations and construction at the former Chase Naval Air Station (Chase Field) in Beeville, Texas.** The funding will be used to renovate two existing airplane hangars and the construction of an adjacent warehouse at Chase Field. This will allow for the expansion of Sikorsky Helicopter Maintenance on the site which will create additional opportunities for high skilled jobs in the community. **According to the EDA, this investment will allow the creation of 250 new jobs and retain up to 160 jobs.**

• Rep. Hinojosa secured \$300,000 for the McAllen Economic Development Corporation (EDC) to design and plan for a 400-acre mixed-use research and education park focused on delivering customization for advanced manufacturing at a reduced cost as a strategy to help new manufacturing entities start their business. **The McAllen EDC is working in conjunction with UTPA, South Texas College, Workforce Solutions, the City of McAllen, and other private and public sector leaders on planning the Park.** The Park will be located next to the McAllen Foreign Trade Zone and will include retail, commercial, education, industry, research, and housing elements.

• **In 2007, through Rep. Hinojosa's stewardship, the Economic Development Administration awarded \$1 million to Cuero's Chisholm Trail Heritage Museum.** This investment will support the renovation of a historical building and construction of a new two-story building to house a museum and library for Cuero's Chisholm Trail Heritage Museum. The project serves as a model for other communities who wish to expand their economies and attract cultural tourism by preserving local architectural assets and strengthening their local educational opportunities.

• **Rep. Hinojosa secured a \$4.5 million dollar grant from the U.S. Department of Labor to South Texas College, Texas State Technical College, University of Texas at Brownsville, Laredo Community College, and University of Texas Pan American.** The grant, which is part of the WIRED (Workforce Innovation in Regional Economic Development) program, will go toward workforce development and the creation of sustainable manufacturing infrastructure in South Texas' Rio Grande region. **The plan includes the development of a rapid response manufacturing facility as well as educational initiatives to produce skilled workers and managers.**



Top left: Construction engineers evaluate plans to restore the historic Knights of Pythias building in Cuero, Texas, soon to become the new home to the Cuero Chisholm Trail Heritage Museum. Bottom left: The new museum nears completion.



“... employment levels completely recovered to pre-recession levels by the first quarter of 2011.”



Congressman Hinojosa at the ribbon cutting for the new GE Aviation Services facility in McAllen.

Education

A Lifelong Commitment to Education

As an advocate for education, Congressman Hinojosa is committed to providing a powerful voice for the aspirations of communities traditionally left behind in America's education system – low-income families, minorities, students with disabilities, English language learners, and the children of migrant and seasonal farm workers. He continues to fight for significant increases in education funding targeted at these communities and has proposed a new initiative to dramatically increase high school graduation rates. Additionally, Congressman **Hinojosa supports and voted for the DREAM Act, legislation that would allow undocumented students who were brought to the United States as children the opportunity to become American citizens if they attend college or serve in our military and meet other strict requirements.** The DREAM Act supports our nation's high school and college completion goals and would increase the number of college-educated workers in District 15.

As the Ranking Member of the Higher Education and Workforce Training Subcommittee, Congressman Hinojosa continues to work to ensure that the education pipeline is strong enough and wide enough to ensure that no community is left behind in the knowledge-driven economy of the 21st Century.



Rep. Hinojosa proudly presents awards to students at Sharyland's Rubén Hinojosa Elementary School for winning 2nd place at the Super National's Chess Championship in Nashville, Tennessee.

“... invests \$2.55 billion over ten years in Hispanic-Serving Institutions, Historically Black Colleges and Universities and in other Minority-Serving Institutions.”

**Maximum Pell Grant Awards
2009-2017**



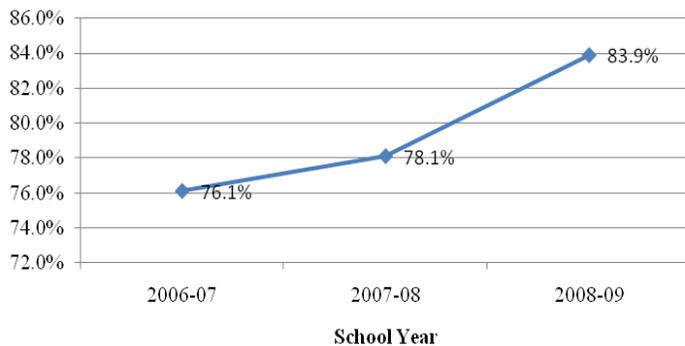
Source: U.S. Department of Education

“The foundation of every state is the education of its youth.”

*Diogenes
412-323 B.C.*

Over the last three years, the average graduation rate for high school students in District 15 has increased from 76.1% to 83.9%, a 7.8 percentage point increase.

**High School Graduation Rate
Texas 15th Congressional District**



Source: U.S. Department of Education, EdFacts

Achieving Greater College Accessibility

While serving as chairman of the Subcommittee on Higher Education, Lifelong Learning, and Competitiveness, Rep. Rubén Hinojosa fought to improve accessibility and affordability in higher education. On March 30, 2010, Congressman Hinojosa joined President Barack Obama for the signing of H.R. 4871: The **Health Care and Education Reconciliation Act of 2010**. This historic legislation represents the single largest increase in student financial aid since the G.I. Bill was signed in 1945. **This bill increases the maximum Pell Grant scholarship to \$5,550 and invests \$2.55 billion over ten years in Hispanic-Serving Institutions, Historically Black Colleges and Universities and in other Minority-Serving Institutions. This increase will greatly benefit middle class families.**

In 2008, Rep. Hinojosa worked with Chairman George Miller and other Members of Congress to pass the **Higher Education Opportunity Act**. In particular, Rep. Hinojosa spearheaded efforts to expand and enhance post-baccalaureate opportunities, including a new program for Hispanic-Serving Institutions. **Rep. Hinojosa also championed increased college financial aid and support for veterans, their spouses, and military families.**

In 2007, Rep. Hinojosa helped to shepherd the **College Cost Reduction and Access Act**, which increased the maximum Pell Grant scholarship, cut interest rates in half on subsidized student loans over the next four years, and made landmark investments of \$510 million in Minority-Serving Institutions. **Together, the enactment of these three major pieces of legislation has made a monumental difference in expanding college opportunity for millions of minority, low-income, and first-generation college students and has helped a record 1.8 million Latinos access higher education in October 2010, a 24-percent one-year increase (Pew Research Center).**

Education



Above: Students at Freer STEM Academy explain their science project to Rep. Hinojosa.

Below: Rep. Hinojosa, who has been a staunch advocate of encouraging Hispanic young people to pursue the STEM career fields, at HESTEC Week with young scholars who have built model solar-powered cars.



Local Education Investments

- **During his 15-year tenure in Congress, Rep. Hinojosa secured increased funding for Hispanic-Serving Institutions such as The University of Texas-Pan American (UTPA) and South Texas College from \$10 million to \$117 million.**
- **From 2006 to 2010, Rep. Hinojosa has helped to secure \$83 million in grants for the GEAR-UP program for middle schools through the Region One Education Service Center and The University of Texas-Pan American.** This program helps prepare students to graduate from high school and go on to post-secondary education and has had a positive effect on District 15 high school graduation rates.
- **Rep. Hinojosa helped found HESTEC Week, now in its 10th year, in conjunction with UTPA, one of the country's top Hispanic Serving Institutions. The Hispanic Engineering, Science, and Technology (HESTEC) Week was created in 2001 to address the critical shortage of scientists and engineers in the United States.** Since its inception, HESTEC has become a national model for promoting science, technology, engineering and math careers among South Texas students who are predominantly Hispanic. More information can be found at the following web-site: <http://hestec.utpa.edu/>
- **Rep. Hinojosa also helped to found the South Texas Literacy Coalition, which brings together community partners in a more focused and strategic way to improve the reading skills of our kindergarten through 6th grade students and their parents.** The STLC is working in conjunction with organizations like Reading is Fundamental and the Meadows Foundation to help these children read, write, and build their own home libraries.

Housing

Rural Housing

Economic distress and poverty have a major impact on housing conditions for both communities and households alike. Rural households in poverty experience some of the worst housing conditions in our nation. While housing conditions have improved dramatically for rural residents over the past three decades, more than three percent of all rural households occupy a unit with moderate problems, including inadequate services (kitchen/plumbing) and crowding.

Rep. Hinojosa is the co-founder and chair of the Congressional Rural Housing Caucus, which address the needs for additional quality rental and single family housing in rural communities. The goal of the Caucus is to expand the availability of safe and affordable housing—both for purchase and for rental—in rural America. Another important goal is to eliminate substandard housing in rural America. The Caucus also seeks to accommodate the infrastructure needs in rural communities, including water, sewer, telecommunications, and schools. Rental housing in particular is scarce in rural areas and much of the housing available is of very poor quality. Rural families deserve the same opportunities as their urban and suburban counterparts to live in quality, affordable housing. **Congressman Hinojosa has fought hard to secure \$205 million in grants and loans for rural housing and community facilities in District 15 from the USDA's Rural Development Program for the period between 1998 to 2011.**

Housing Assistance Council

Congressman Hinojosa introduced legislation in 2007 to authorize the Housing Assistance Council (HAC). The legislation authorized \$10 million in funding for HAC in fiscal years 2009, 2010 and 2011. Over that period of time, Affordable Homes of South Texas, Inc. and other rural housing organizations received \$640,472 from HAC for the 15th District of Texas. As the only national housing and community development program that uses its funding solely for projects in rural America and small towns, HAC helps local communities meet the challenges rural America currently faces. HAC's programs focus on local solutions, empowerment of the poor, reduced dependency, and self-help strategies.



Rep. Hinojosa visits volunteers who are building a dream home for a local low-income family with housing organization Proyecto Azteca. In 2006, Rep Hinojosa helped Proyecto Azteca to receive a \$300,000 grant from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

“Congressman Hinojosa has fought hard to secure \$205 million in grants and loans for rural housing and community facilities in District 15 . . .”

These loans and grants include:

- \$145 million for USDA Section 502 Single Family Housing Direct and Guaranteed Loans
- \$33.2 million for USDA Sections 514/515 Farm Labor Housing Loans and Grants
- \$6.7 million for USDA Section 504 Rehabilitation and Repair Loans and Grants
- \$18.5 million for USDA Rural Community Facilities Loans, Loan Guarantees & Grants

Health Care

Affordable Health Care Act

Congressman Hinojosa supported the Affordable Health Care Act that builds on what works in today's health care system and repairs the parts that are broken. It protects current coverage – allowing individuals to keep the insurance they have if they like it – and preserves choice of doctors, hospitals, and health plans. **As a result, two dozen community health centers in the 15th District are now receiving millions of dollars in new funding that will allow them to treat thousands of new patients.**

Over a quarter of a million Deep South Texans are now seeing improvements in their current health care coverage. **Close to 30,000 Deep South Texans with pre-existing conditions are able to obtain health coverage** (Department of Health and Human Services). **Nearly 11,000 small businesses in Deep South Texas are receiving tax credits to help make health insurance more affordable for their employees** (U.S. Census). Close to 200,000 Deep South Texas families are now receiving tax credits to help make health insurance more affordable to them (U.S. Census). **Over 90,000 Medicare beneficiaries in District 15 will see better care and will pay less for prescription drugs because the Medicare Part D donut hole has been closed** (Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services). The Affordable Health Care Act strengthens the Medicare Program by providing preventive medical check-ups for seniors. Our veterans can also rest assured that there were no changes to VA, DOD or TRICARE benefits. Parents can now keep their adult children on their own health insurance plans until they reach the age of 26. **This means at least 66,000 young Deep South Texans will be able to have health insurance at a cost that does not over burden the family budget** (U.S. Census).



Coastal Bend College in Beeville, Texas received \$220,000 for a Mobile Simulation Lab. The rural community college is training nurses and health professionals in a region with chronic shortages.



Congressman Hinojosa joins President Obama, Speaker Pelosi and others for the signing of the The Health Care and Education Reconciliation Act of 2010.



The first class of nurses from the Coastal Bend College nursing program in Alice, who will help to offset the shortage of trained nurses in the area. Rep. Hinojosa's efforts were key to bringing the program to Alice.

“Close to 30,000 Deep South Texans with pre-existing conditions are able to obtain health coverage.”

Improving Quality of Life

Increasing Access to Quality Health Care in Deep South Texas

A critical area of concern for Rep. Hinojosa has been increasing access to quality health care for his constituents. Deep South Texas has long suffered from shortages in hospital beds, nurses, and physicians. In 1994, the area was designated as a Medically Underserved Area by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Rep. Hinojosa has made it his mission to improve access to quality health care in Texas' District 15.

Since coming to Congress in 1997, Congressman Hinojosa has brought millions of dollars in federal funding to the 15th Congressional District to build new health facilities, expand existing ones and support programs that keep Texans healthy. **Rep. Hinojosa's assistance has been key in projects such as the Driscoll Children's Specialty Center in McAllen, the Vannie Cook Pediatric Cancer Clinic, Nuestra Clinica del Valle, the Shepherd's Community Health Center in Beeville, the Ramiro Casso Nursing and Allied Health Center at South Texas College, and the VA Veterans' Medical Center in Harlingen.**



Congressman Hinojosa at the ribbon cutting for Driscoll Children's Medical Plaza in McAllen



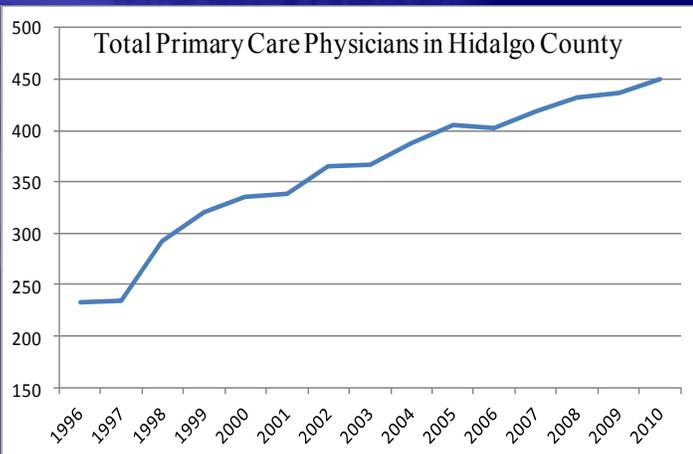
Above: Doctors and nurses at Doctor's Hospital at Renaissance in Edinburg. Top, right: DHR has some of the most advanced equipment in the Rio Grande Valley. Right: The Cancer Center at Renaissance.



Health Care Booms in the Valley

The health needs of Deep South Texans have historically been underserved; over the last decade, community health leaders have organized to make real improvements in both access and quality of health care in the Rio Grande Valley. The quality of available health care has improved with new facilities such as the Doctor's Hospital at Renaissance and Valley Baptist Hospital. **Doctor's Hospital at Renaissance (DHR) in Edinburg, for example, opened its doors in 1997 and has grown from an organization of a few dozen doctors to a state-of-the-art hospital with over 3000 staff members in 2008 with a payroll of \$137 million and 506 beds.** An economic impact analysis by UT-PA has found that DHR contributed over \$1.1 billion to the local economy from 2007-2009.

As a result of the significant health care investments in the region, the number of health professionals has taken off. **The number of primary-care physicians in Hidalgo County has increased from 46.9 per 100,000 people in 1996 to 56.7 per 100,000 people in 2010.** Health care, as an industry, has helped to bolster the region's economy over the last decade.



Source: Texas Department of State Health Services

Irrigation and Flood Mapping

Water and Irrigation

The Water Resources Development Act authorizes a variety of water projects and sets national water policy. Congressman Hinojosa continues to fight for passage of this critical bill. He has requested the inclusion of several projects including funding for the Raymondville Drain project in South Texas. During the past reauthorization he inserted language to allow the Corps of Engineers to not only provide technical assistance to colonias, but to also help construct critical water and wastewater projects in these extremely needy communities.

In the 111th Congress, Congressman Hinojosa introduced H.R. 1393 to amend the Lower Rio Grande Valley Water Conservation Act to authorize 15 additional conservation projects along the Texas/Mexico border. The bill passed the House on June 3, 2009. The bill authorizes 19 additional such water conservation projects. He reintroduced the bill in the 112th Congress as H.R. 550. Congressman Hinojosa has helped secure almost \$40 million in federal funding for these irrigation canal lining projects in the Lower Rio Grande Valley. As a result, several projects have been completed and water seepage has been reduced by more than 30 percent.

“Congressman Hinojosa has helped secure almost \$40 million in federal funding for these irrigation canal lining projects in the Lower Rio Grande Valley.”



Construction being performed on irrigation canal lining project in the Lower Rio Grande Valley. Several projects have been completed and are showing water savings of over 30 percent.

Ensuring Fair Flood Maps and Insurance

In July 2011, Rep. Hinojosa co-sponsored H.R. 1309, the “Flood Insurance Reform Act of 2011,” which was approved by the U.S. House of Representatives. The reforms included in the legislation will ensure the continued economic viability of the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP), while phasing in mandatory flood insurance coverage on a more consistent timeframe. These reforms will generate an additional \$4.2 billion of revenues over the next 10 years.

During the consideration of H.R. 1309, the Committee on Financial Services adopted an amendment by Rep. Hinojosa that limited the mapping of flood areas to 100-year floodplains instead of 250-year floodplains. Rep. Hinojosa reasoned that if FEMA is not able to accurately draw the 100-year maps, it should focus on finishing the job and making sure the current maps are complete and accurate before redrawing and expanding the map boundaries to include what FEMA might deem additional flood-risk areas. **Had Rep. Hinojosa’s amendment not been adopted, the mandatory purchase requirement would have been inappropriately expanded from the 100-year floodplain into inherently flawed 250-year floodplain maps. His amendment saved taxpayers hundreds of millions of dollars.**

In 2001, Rep. Hinojosa fought successfully to get FEMA to remove its floodway designation of Hidalgo County and to revise its Flood Insurance Rate Map. Through this decision, the area avoided the loss of over \$1 billion in loss of revenue, added taxes, insurance cost, business foreclosure, and prevented economic development.

Congressman Hinojosa has been working with the Corps of Engineers to find ways to protect northern communities in central Texas that are more prone to flooding. As a result of his efforts, the Corps of Engineers is continuing its work on flood modeling in Goliad, Karnes and DeWitt Counties in order to update the flood maps critical to safe community development.

Natural Resource Management



Above: Hawks perched and an ocelot on the prowl at the Santa Ana National Wildlife Refuge (NWR). Below: The Overlook at the Refuge.

Lower Rio Grande River Wildlife Refuge

The Lower Rio Grande Valley National Wildlife Refuge is a unique treasure that is home to 523 species of birds, half of the butterfly species in the U.S., and endangered wildlife such as the indigo snake and the ocelot. The refuge is an engine of economic development and it is estimated that \$300 million annually is generated and 4,400 jobs are sustained by eco-tourism created by the refuge and the new birding centers (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service). Congressman Hinojosa has obtained over \$6,000,000 for land purchases from willing sellers to expand the refuge and preserve this unique sanctuary.

Additionally, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is investing \$695,000 in the 15th Congressional District of Texas for projects designed to create jobs, improve facilities, and promote conservation. The funds are part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 that Congress passed this February.

Congressman Hinojosa said of the projects, “This investment is great news for the Lower Rio Grande Valley National Wildlife Refuge. With these funds, they will be able to perform needed repairs that protect our local environmental treasures.”



Water Infrastructure

Water and Wastewater Improvements

Rep. Hinojosa has also worked hard to improve water systems in the 15th District, and has won hard-fought federal funding for local projects, including:

- Rep. Hinojosa helped to shepherd the \$3,210,728 awarded to the cities of **Beeville, Falfurrias, Karnes City, Kenedy, Mathis, Premont, Runge, San Diego, Santa Rosa, Sinton and Yorktown** by the Department of Housing and Urban Development for water treatment, water lines and sewer lines.
- Rep. Hinojosa helped secure a \$1,597,600 grant for the Goliad County Water Supply Corporation. The grant was awarded through the USDA Rural Development's Water and Waste Disposal Loan and Grant Programs. The funding will be used to provide a new water supply system for Goliad's La Bahia community with 106 connections. The Goliad water supply corporation received state grants to build water towers in Berclair and Fannin, but La Bahia did not qualify for a state grant. **La Bahia residents now have access to public water for the first time since the town was founded in 1829.**
- Rep. Hinojosa helped to bring federal funds to waste water projects in which the **City of Alice was awarded a total of \$13,275,000 in grant money.** The Southside Waste Water Treatment Plant will be upgraded and the Texas Blvd. Sewer Main will be replaced with funding from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act which was approved by Congress to assist in the rebuilding and the maintaining of infrastructure for communities and creating economic growth. The City of Alice received word from the Environmental Protection Agency and the Texas Water Development Board that the funding for these major waste water rehabilitation projects had been granted less than a year after the City's request.
- **Rep. Hinojosa assisted the City of Elsa to receive \$6,434,000 in funding through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 to make improvements to its waste water treatment system for the city.** "These funds help improve Elsa's infrastructure to create economic opportunities, new jobs, and provide better services for our people", said Rep. Hinojosa. In 2008, Congressman Hinojosa worked with the Border Environment Cooperation Commission to conduct an assessment of the wastewater and water systems in the Delta Region, which includes the cities of Elsa, Edcouch and La Villa. The \$200,000 grant funded facility plans for the three cities.

“La Bahia residents now have access to public water for the first time since the town was founded in 1829.”

Goliad County, Texas



This 104 ft. standpipe will serve as the main storage facility for the La Bahia water system, in Goliad County, Texas.

Saved Lives, Homes, & Businesses

Levee Repair

A 2005 study by the Corps of Engineers showed that the International Boundary and Water Commission levees along the US/Mexico border were in critical condition and would not protect border communities in the event of heavy rains or hurricanes. Additionally, The University of Texas-Pan American conducted a study to analyze the economic impact of a 100-year flood in Hidalgo County. The study found that if the river levees were breached, the direct cost to residents and businesses would be approximately \$1.76 billion and 50,000 households would be displaced. Additionally, the study found that more than 40,000 jobs with annual earnings of \$950 million would be at risk, retail sales between \$680 and \$940 million would be disrupted and trade imports and exports totaling millions of dollars per day would be interrupted. Ten to 20 lives would also be lost.

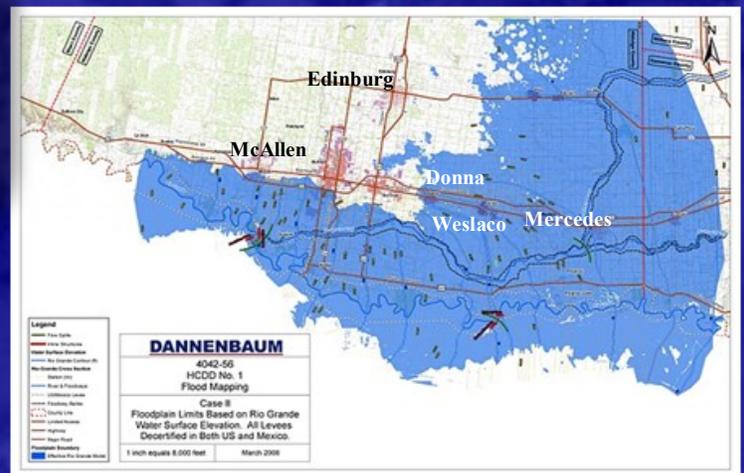
In order to avert such a disaster, over the past five years Congressman Hinojosa has helped secure an unprecedented \$300 million for floodway levee improvements. Levee work in Cameron County has been completed and the remaining work in Hidalgo County will be completed shortly. As a result, countless lives and hundreds of millions of dollars worth of property were spared when Hurricane Alex brought the Rio Grande River up to a record crest of 59 feet in 2010. The repaired levees held back the water and protected the people of the Rio Grande Valley and their homes and businesses.

“Congressman Hinojosa has helped secure an unprecedented \$300 million for levee improvements...the repaired levees held back the water and protected the people of the Rio Grande Valley and their homes and businesses.”



New Levee in Hidalgo County runs beneath the Anzalduas International Bridge. Courtesy of Hidalgo County Office of Emergency Management.

“... direct cost (of a levee breach) to residents and businesses would be approximately \$1.76 billion ...”



A flood map shows where flooding due to levee failure would have occurred during Hurricane Alex in 2010 if levee repair had not taken place. Photo courtesy of Hidalgo County Drainage District #1.

Our Veterans

Veterans

Our nation's veterans have been willing to sacrifice everything to serve their country. Unfortunately, the federal government has not always shown this same commitment and has broken its promises to these veterans. **Congressman Hinojosa has worked to improve access to health care and other services for the veterans of Deep South Texas and believes the U.S. government should fulfill its obligations.**

For three years in a row, Congressman Hinojosa voted for a veterans' budget that exceeded the funding requested by the Independent Budget—a budget developed by veterans' organizations throughout the country. In addition, Congressman Hinojosa voted for legislation that will forward fund veterans' health care to allow the VA to meet the needs of the growing veteran population in a more timely and efficient manner. In the 111th Congress, he worked to ensure that the unique needs of our women veterans are being met through additional funding and through changes in the VA medical system. He also voted for H.R. 3155 that will provide training, outreach and counseling to family members and other caregivers who have quit jobs, delayed schooling, and made other difficult sacrifices to provide care for injured veterans.

The ongoing wars in Iraq and Afghanistan are creating a new cadre of veterans who need a variety of services. **On August 1, 2009, veterans began receiving college education benefits under the new Post-9/11 G.I. Bill, which Congressman Hinojosa supported. Over two million members of the military who have served on active duty since September 11, 2001, including activated reservists and members of the National Guard, will be eligible for up to four years of education benefits, including stipends for housing and books.**

Congressman Hinojosa also included a provision in the recently enacted Higher Education Reauthorization bill that will create one-stop veterans' centers at college campuses throughout the country to help veterans transition from combat and active service to academic life.

“... Over two million members of the military who have served on active duty since September 11, 2001... will be eligible for up to four years of education benefits...”



Rep. Hinojosa meets with veterans after the Congressional Listening Session on Veterans' Health Care, September 1, 2011.

New VA Medical Center

VA Medical Center in Harlingen, Texas

For many years, the veterans in the 15th Congressional District had limited access to health care and were forced to travel to Audie Murphy Hospital in San Antonio for service. As a result of pressure from Congressman Hinojosa, his colleagues and veterans' organizations throughout the region, the VA agreed to expand services through a new multi-story medical facility in Harlingen and through expansion of the clinics in McAllen and Corpus Christi. **The new VA Medical Center in Harlingen opened on February 25, 2011. With its six high tech surgical rooms and expanded services, it will provide high quality care to the region's veterans. In addition, with assistance from Rep. Hinojosa, the region also has a new veterans' nursing home in McAllen and cemetery in Mission to meet the needs of veterans in the community.** Additionally, the VA has renegotiated contracts for inpatient and emergency services to ensure that veterans will no longer have any out-of-pocket costs.

In his continuing effort to bring a full-service VA hospital to Deep South Texas, Congressman Hinojosa has held a series of enrollment fairs to increase the number of Deep South Texas veterans using the current VA system. Increased use by every eligible veteran will help justify to the VA the need for a hospital in the region. In addition, he has brought Congressional leaders and Secretary of the VA Hershel Gober to see firsthand the challenges our veterans face in obtaining quality health care. **In the 112th Congress he is sponsoring a bi-partisan, bi-cameral bill, H.R. 837, to complete the final steps in bringing a full-service hospital to the region.**

“The new VA Medical Center in Harlingen opened on February 25, 2011. With its six high tech surgical rooms and expanded services, it will provide high quality care to the region's veterans.”



Alfredo Gonzalez Veterans Home in McAllen



*Top: Rep. Hinojosa speaks with veterans about the new VA Medical Center in Harlingen and his support for its expansion.
Middle: Alfredo Gonzalez Veterans Home in McAllen
Bottom: The State Veterans Cemetery in Mission, Texas.*

VA Medical Center in Harlingen



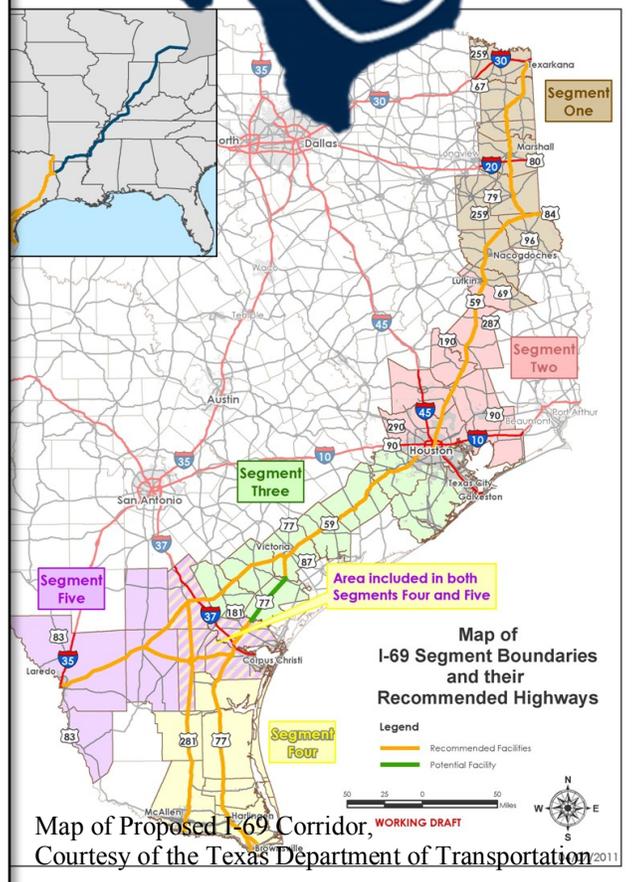
Transportation

Transportation and Highway Improvements

An efficient and modern transportation system is vital to economic growth and to safety. Traffic through the 15th Congressional District has grown dramatically as a result of the North American Free Trade Agreement. For example, 1.9 million trucks and 23.7 million cars cross back and forth annually over the Texas /Mexico border in the Rio Grande Valley. Yet there is no interstate highway system in South Texas from San Antonio to McAllen and Harlingen to efficiently move this trade and traffic north or south. **Rep. Hinojosa is committed to improving transportation infrastructure throughout the 15th Congressional District and has helped to see many overpasses in Hidalgo, Cameron, and Starr Counties to completion.** Rep. Hinojosa also successfully brought \$5.5 million in federal funds to enhance the Valley International Airport in Harlingen and \$1.7 million for the South Texas International Airport in Edinburg.

The new I-69 would allow traffic from McAllen, Laredo and Brownsville, Texas to connect on a single route to the Canadian Highway System via Port Huron, Michigan and to the Mexican Interstate system. **Congressman Hinojosa, working with his colleagues, successfully obtained funding for the Texas Department of Transportation to complete the final engineering route studies for I-69 in Texas. Already, work is being done on US 281 and US 77 to bring them up to interstate standards. Through the stimulus funding, which Rep. Hinojosa supported, work is currently being done on US 281 in Falfurrias, Ben Bolt, Premont and George West so that it can become part of the new I-69.** Once completed, I-69 will bring economic development to the more than 20 million people, half of whom are under the national poverty level, who live along the route from the Rio Grande Valley to the Great Lakes.

“I-69 will bring economic development to the more than 20 million people, half of whom are under the national poverty level . . .”



US 281 receives improvements as part of the future I-69 corridor in Falfurrias. Rep. Hinojosa helped to steer \$77.9 million of stimulus funding to US 281 improvements, and \$336 million overall in stimulus funds to transportation projects in District 15.

America's Roads, Bridges, & Ports

Two New International Land Bridges

Congressman Hinojosa is working to improve land ports to move trade and commerce more efficiently. **Congressman Hinojosa coordinated with federal agencies responsible for approving the Donna/Rio Bravo International Bridge project and the Anzalduas Bridge project.** Both have recently opened and are easing congestion and spurring economic growth. Industrial Parks are creating jobs on both sides of the Rio Grande River. He is now working to bring commercial traffic to both ports.

Congressman Hinojosa was instrumental in acquiring a Presidential bridge permit and funding from the General Services Administration for the Anzalduas International Bridge, which opened in 2009. This bridge, the first new border crossing to be built in a decade, connects the cities of McAllen and the Rio Grande Valley to the Mexican city of Reynosa and spans 3.2 miles.

The Donna/Rio Bravo Bridge opened with much fanfare in December 2010. "The completion of the Donna-Rio Bravo International Bridge will immediately boost the local economy on both sides of the river," said Rep. Hinojosa. "These two new bridges will provide thousands of new jobs and instantly increase commerce with Mexico." The new bridge had been in the planning stages since the 1970s, and though it seemed to have been put by the way side when the Presidential bridge permit was misplaced in the early 1990s, it was revived in 1998 when Congressman Hinojosa worked with the Clinton Administration to have a new permit issued. The \$100 million bridge was built under budget and a year ahead of schedule. **"The new Donna-Rio Bravo International Bridge is a symbol of international friendship and progress,"** said Rep. Hinojosa. "It also represents how our two countries continue to work hand-in-hand to help better our communities and our economy and bring stability to both."



Top: Rep. Hinojosa, along with the mayors of McAllen, Hidalgo, and Mission, receives the Presidential bridge permit for the Anzalduas bridge from President Clinton.

Middle: The Anzalduas International Bridge opened in 2009.

Bottom: Rep. Hinojosa attends the ribbon cutting ceremony for the Donna/Rio Bravo International Bridge. Left: The U.S., Texas, and Mexican flags being flown at the Donna Bridge.



"These two new bridges will provide thousands of new jobs and instantly increase commerce with Mexico."

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*District 15,
15 Years*